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## CURRENT SUPPORT BRIEF

A COMMENT ON SOME ADDITIONAL RESULTS OF THE 1959 POPULATION  
CENSUS IN THE USSR

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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A COMMENT ON SOME ADDITIONAL RESULTS OF THE 1959 POPULATION  
CENSUS IN THE USSR

The USSR recently announced more summary results of the population census conducted in January 1959. 1/ The new data, which include a distribution of the total population by social class and means of support, and a distribution of the labor force by occupation and educational attainment, provide a type of information that heretofore has been available only in the published volumes for the 1926 census. For Soviet planners and policy makers, the detailed data underlying the few results made public are the first such data available in census form since 1939.

Distribution of the Population by Social Class

According to the census results, the population of 208.8 million in January 1959 was distributed by social class as follows: Workers and Employees--68.3 percent; Kolkhoz Peasantry--31.4 percent; and Private Peasants and Handicraftsmen--0.3 percent. Since 1939, Workers and Employees and members of their families have increased from a little over half to more than two-thirds of the population, reflecting primarily the growth of the urban working class and the decline of the peasantry. State farms also contributed to this development as their population, which is included in the class Workers and Employees, more than doubled since 1939 to roughly 13 million in 1959.

Distribution of the Population by Means of Subsistence

The distribution of the Soviet population by source of income or support is shown in Table 1. According to the census results, 99.1 million persons were "gainfully occupied"--that is, were reported as having an occupation as their chief means of support, and an additional 9.9 million were exclusively engaged in personal subsidiary agriculture--in farming personal plots of land and tending privately-owned livestock and poultry. The remaining 100 million persons were dependent on the state or on other individuals.

The questions asked in the census, as well as the instructions issued to the census-takers, made no provision for an individual to report himself as unemployed. Persons with an occupation as their chief means of support but not working on the census date were asked to specify where they last worked and were classified accordingly. 2/ Since the census was conducted in mid-January, when outdoor work was at a seasonal low point, the number of gainfully occupied persons was much higher than the number of persons actually at work. For example, the census reported 32.3 million gainfully occupied individuals on collective farms, but average employment during the census month was only 18.0 million. 3/ Similarly, the census counted 63 million gainfully occupied Workers and Employees in mid-January, compared to a reported 56 million actually at work at the end of 1958. 4/ Although not a measure of unemployment by the rigidly defined US standard--which counts an individual as unemployed only if he is actively seeking work 5/--these differences show the extent of idleness in mid-winter among persons who usually work: 44 percent among collective farmers and 11 percent among other workers.

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Table 2 compares the census results with ORR estimates of the civilian labor force. In order to make these comparisons it is necessary (1) to add to the census figure for the total number of gainfully-occupied persons the number of persons engaged in personal subsidiary agriculture, and (2) to subtract the number in the armed



Table 1

POPULATION OF THE USSR BY MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE  
15 JANUARY 1959

Means of Subsistence	Million Persons
Total population	208.8
Gainfully occupied	99.1
Armed forces	3.6
Workers and employees a/	62.9
Collective farmers	32.3
Individual peasants and handi-craftsmen	0.3
Engaged in personal subsidiary agriculture	9.9
Dependent on stipends or pensions b/	14.1
Dependent on other individuals	85.4
Dependent on other means, or status not reported	0.3

- a. Persons employed in State-owned enterprises including State farms and members of Producers' Cooperatives.  
b. Excluding employed persons receiving pensions (included as Gainfully occupied); including all members of families receiving veterans' pensions, except those who were also employed.

Table 2

CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE IN THE USSR, CENSUS RESULTS AND ORR ESTIMATES, 1959 (MILLION PERSONS)

	Census Results	ORR Estimates a/
Civilian labor force	105.4	104.2
Agriculture	48.3	51.4
Nonagriculture	57.1	52.8

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25X1 forces. The number in the armed forces given in the published census results for January 1959 (3,623,000) is identical with the figure given by Khrushchev as the size of the armed forces as of 14 January 1960. 7/

25X1 [ ] The ORR estimate of the civilian labor force combines estimates of the number of collective farmers who worked during the year with annual averages of employment on state farms and in nonagricultural branches of the economy 8/ and therefore could not be expected to agree with the census figure. Nevertheless, the totals are quite close; the substantial differences in the two figures for agriculture and nonagricultural branches can be explained largely in terms of differences in concepts and definitions:

25X1 (1) The ORR estimate of agricultural employment includes all employment at State and collective farms, and would therefore be higher than the census figure which includes only agricultural employment at these farms. In 1959, an average of about 3½ million farm workers were employed in nonagricultural activities at State and collective farms. 9/

25X1 (2) The ORR estimate of nonagricultural employment is an annual average and would necessarily be lower than the census figure, primarily because seasonal and part-time workers are treated the same as full-year workers in the census figure, but are included only as fractions in the annual average.

25X1 (3) The census figure for nonagricultural employment probably includes certain small groups, such as domestic servants and the military security forces, that were excluded from reported annual averages and therefore from the ORR estimate.

#### Educational Attainment of the Labor Force

The census results were reported in a manner which shows impressive gains in the educational level of the labor force since 1939. The proportion of the labor force with at least an elementary (7 year) education increased from 12 percent in 1939 to 43 percent in 1959. Among the intelligentsia, which included 20½ million persons or one-fifth of the labor force in 1959, the proportion with at least an elementary education increased from 50 percent to 88 percent, and among the manual workers--the remainder of the labor force--the proportion rose from 4 percent to 32 percent.

When average (median) years of schooling are computed for the various groups, however, the results (Table 3) show more clearly how low is the educational attainment of the Soviet labor force and how very unequally the groups have shared in the educational progress since 1939. Although the absolute difference between the educational attainment of the intelligentsia and manual workers is now greater than in 1939, the relative difference has remained the same--the intelligentsia had about twice as much schooling as manual workers both in 1939 and in 1959. The gap between the educational attainment of State workers and collective farmers, however, widened both absolutely and relatively since 1939. Although State workers had only 0.3 more years of schooling than collective farmers in 1939, they now have 1.2 more years; State workers now have 27 percent more schooling than collective farmers, compared to only 9 percent more in 1939.

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Table 3

AVERAGE (MEDIAN) YEARS OF EDUCATION OF THE  
USSR LABOR FORCE a/ 1939 AND 1959

Category	Years	
	1939	1959
Total labor force	3.9	6.1
Intelligentsia	6.9	9.8
Manual workers	3.6	5.0
State workers	3.8	5.6
Collective farmers	3.5	4.4

a/ Including the armed forces; excluding personal subsidiary agriculture.

Despite the rapid educational progress made by the USSR since 1939, the Soviet labor force, on the average, had only half as much education in 1959 as the US labor force--6.1 years compared to 12.0 years. US urban workers averaged 12.1 years of schooling, and US farm workers averaged 8.6 years. 10/



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